

**AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT**

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 81, line 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- Disclosed is a A carrier core material for an electrophotographic developing agent, which comprises 100 parts by weight of a ferrite component represented by a formula (A) and 0.1 to 5.0 parts by weight of  $\text{ZrO}_2$  that is present in the ferrite component without forming a solid solution, and which has a magnetization, at  $1000(10^3/4\pi\text{A/m})$ , of 65 to 85  $\text{Am}^2/\text{kg}$  and an electrical resistance, at an applied voltage of 1000 V, of  $10^5$  to  $10^9 \Omega$ .



wherein x, y and z are each expressed in % by mol and are numbers satisfying the conditions of  $40 \leq x \leq 60$ ,  $0.1 \leq y \leq 10$  and  $x+y+z=100$ . Also disclosed is a two-component developing agent comprising a coated carrier, which is obtained by coating the above carrier core material with a resin, and toner particles. Further disclosed is an image forming method comprising developing an electrostatic latent image formed by the use of an alternating electric field, with the two-component developing agent. The carrier core material and the coated carrier have high magnetization and high resistance. According to the two-component developing agent of the invention, an excellent image can be formed. --